The Cleveland Museum of Art Receives Six Gifts Totaling $15 Million to Support Key Positions

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Ada de Wit, Ellen S. and Bruce V. Mavec Curator of Decorative Arts, Sinéad Vilbar, Janice Hammond and Edward Hemmelgarn Curator of Japanese Art, Roberto Prcela, The URK Director of Trusteeship and Executive Office Administration, Sooa McCormick, Korea Foundation Curator of Korean Art, and Heidi Strean, Margaret and Loyal Wilson Chief Exhibition, Design, and Publications Officer. The Cleveland Museum of Art

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The Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation Presents $5 Million Gift for Decorative Arts

CLEVELAND (May 2, 2024)—The Cleveland Museum of Art (CMA) announces six gifts totaling $15 million to support three curatorial and two key administrative positions and initiatives. This wave of support is led by $5 million from board chair Ellen Stirn Mavec, through a leadership gift from The Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation. Significant gifts have also been received from CMA trustee Edward Hemmelgarn and his wife, Janice Hammond; CMA trustee Loyal Wilson and his wife, Margaret; the Korea Foundation; and others. With this new support, the CMA now has permanent funding for 10 named curatorial and conservator positions and four named management positions.

“Each of these gifts helps the CMA continue to attract, inspire, and empower the world’s most talented curators, and we are immensely grateful for this generous support,” said William Griswold, director and president of the CMA. “This surge in support sustains the CMA’s long-standing tradition of building a world-class collection and a world-class team to steward it.”

Leadership Gift from Ellen Stirn Mavec through The Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation

This visionary gift permanently funds the position of curator of decorative arts and supports the curator’s work in such essential areas as exhibitions, conservation, scholarship, and outreach. This contribution is the first of its kind, combining permanent funding for the curatorial position with financial support for the curator’s efforts.

The CMA’s decorative arts collection is internationally renowned, both for its quality and its diversity. Ada de Wit, who joined the museum in August 2023 from the Wallace Collection in London, has been designated Ellen S. and Bruce V. Mavec Curator of Decorative Arts. This new support enables De Wit to build on the museum’s strategy to pursue artworks of great rarity and quality and increase the visibility of the collection at the local, national, and international levels.

“Bruce and I have always been inspired by the caliber of the decorative arts collection, and we are excited to watch as the museum expands its scholarship in the field and emphasizes the decorative arts’ relevancy with our visitors,” said Ellen Stirn Mavec, chair of the CMA board and president and chair of The Kelvin and Eleanor Smith Foundation. “The work in this area is especially meaningful for us and our hope is that this support will continue to inspire others to join us.”

Edward Hemmelgarn and Janice Hammond Gift

With this gift, the position of curator of Japanese art is now permanently funded. With close to 4,000 Japanese artworks, including archaeological objects, calligraphy, ceramics, paintings, and sculpture, the CMA’s Japanese art collection is recognized globally for its

quality and integrity. Permanent support for this position enables Dr. Sinéad Vilbar, who is now designated Janice Hammond and Edward Hemmelgarn Curator of Japanese Art, to bring to the CMA such dazzling exhibitions as *Shinto: Discovery of the Divine in Japanese Art* and *Colors of Kyoto: The Seifū Yohei Ceramic Studio,* inspiring generations of visitors and advancing the CMA's scholarship on Japanese culture.

"It gives us great comfort to be able to support this world-class museum and its significant curatorial leadership in perpetuity," said Edward Hemmelgarn, trustee at the CMA. "We believe that its mission, its people, and its home in Cleveland all have a profound impact on the community." Hemmelgarn and his wife, Janice Hammond, continue to be closely involved with the CMA, Hemmelgarn as a museum trustee and Hammond as an active member of the Womens Council.

Korea Foundation and Matching Anonymous Donor Gift

The Korea Foundation's contribution and a matching gift from an anonymous donor allow the CMA to permanently fund its curatorship of Korean art. The museum's collection of Korean art is considered one of the most distinguished outside Korea, and acquiring and exhibiting outstanding historical and contemporary works have been an active pursuit for CMA curators since 1915. Sooa McCormick, now Korea Foundation Curator of Korean Art, brings two must-see exhibitions to the CMA in the spring: *Into the Seven Jeweled Mountain: An Immersive Experience* and, with her colleague Darnell-Jamal Lisby, associate curator of fashion, *Korean Couture: Generations of Revolution*.

"With these two important gifts secured, the entire suite of Asian art curators is now fully endowed," said Griswold. "The CMA's celebrated collection of Asian art, which includes significant holdings from India, the Himalayas, Southeast Asia, Japan, Korea, the Islamic lands, and China, inspires Cleveland and worldwide audiences every day."

The CMA's Asian art collection continues to grow in global importance with the addition of contemporary and historical Asian art and through the dedicated work of the museum's curators of Japanese, Korean, Chinese, and Indian and Southeast Asian Art.

Additional Executive and Administrative Positions Funded

In addition to the curatorial positions, two other roles at the CMA are now permanently funded.

Margaret and Loyal Wilson have provided permanent funding for the Margaret and Loyal Wilson Chief Exhibition, Design, and Publications Officer. This endowed position—held by Heidi Strean—is critical to the museum, and this gift ensures that this vital role will be fully supported forever.

The Wilsons have been ardent supporters of the CMA for over 40 years. Margaret has served as a member of the CMA's Womens Council since 1999 and served as chair of its immersive orientation program. Loyal became involved with the museum through his friendship with a former CMA board chair, James Bartlett, and currently serves as a trustee for the museum. Their support for this position helps advance special exhibitions at the CMA, which is world renowned for the caliber of its exhibition design and presentation.

In addition, **Ursula Korneitchouk**, a local art historian and translator, collector, and assistant to former CMA director Sherman Lee, has made a donation to endow the position she pioneered at the museum. The URK Director of Trusteeship and Executive Office Administration will now be endowed in perpetuity. In making this gift, she saw the importance of highlighting a position that is integral to daily operations but often overlooked. The current incumbent, Roberto Prcela, has been with the museum for nearly 30 years and was initially hired by Lee's daughter Katharine Lee Reid.

Continued Support for Key Museum Roles

In addition to supporting the goals outlined in the CMA's strategic plan, "For the Benefit of All the People," the CMA continues to be an effective and responsible steward of all endowments, strengthening the museum's position through sustainable growth and diversification of revenue streams. With this new support, the CMA now has permanent funding for 10 named curatorial and conservator positions and four named management positions.

The CMA named positions are as follows:

- George P. Bickford Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art (Sonya Rhie Mace)
- Robert P. Bergman Curator of Medieval Art (Gerhard Lutz)
- James and Donna Reid Curator of Chinese Art (Clarissa von Spee)
- William P. and Amanda C. Madar Curator of American Painting and Sculpture (Mark Cole)
- Paul J. and Edith Ingalls Vignos Jr. Senior Curator of Modern Art (Heather Lemonedes Brown)
- Leigh and Mary Carter Director's Research Fellow (Helina Gebremedhen)
- Ellen S. and Bruce V. Mavec Curator of Decorative Arts (Ada de Wit)
- Korea Foundation Curator of Korean Art (Sooa McCormick)
- Janice Hammond and Edward Hemmelgarn Curator of Japanese Art (Sinéad Vilbar)

- Eric and Jane Nord Chief Conservator (Sarah Scaturro)
- Sarah S. and Alexander M. Cutler Director's Chair (William M. Griswold)
- Virginia N. and Randall J. Barbato Deputy Director and Chief Curator
- Margaret and Loyal Wilson Chief Exhibition, Design, and Publications Officer (Heidi Strean)
- URK Director of Trusteeship and Executive Office Administration (Roberto Prcela)

The CMA is deeply committed to providing secure, permanent funding for vital roles across all areas of the museum. Endowed positions support recruitment of the best curators from around the world. The creation of these permanent resources dramatically advances the collection and helps to secure the CMA's future as a global leader among museums.

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About the Cleveland Museum of Art

The Cleveland Museum of Art is renowned for the quality and breadth of its collection, which includes more than 63,000 artworks and spans 6,000 years of achievement in the arts. The museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship, and performing arts and is a leader in digital innovations. One of the top comprehensive art museums in the nation, recognized for its award-winning Open Access program and free of charge to all, the Cleveland Museum of Art is located in the University Circle neighborhood.

The museum is supported in part by residents of Cuyahoga County through a public grant from Cuyahoga Arts & Culture and made possible in part by the Ohio Arts Council (OAC), which receives support from the State of Ohio and the National Endowment for the Arts. The OAC is a state agency that funds and supports quality arts experiences to strengthen Ohio communities culturally, educationally, and economically. For more information about the museum and its holdings, programs, and events, call 888-CMA-0033 or visit cma.org.